

Senior Corps Update

March 2000 Edition



An update of activities and information published monthly (except for January/February which are combined as one edition) by the National Senior Service Corps for the Senior Corps network and interested National Service colleagues

The National Senior Service Corps is part of the Corporation for National Service's network of programs which also includes AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America

National Senior Service Corps
Tom Endres, Director

Congressional Affairs – Reauthorization and Appropriations News

- ***Reauthorization*** – Efforts continue to add to the list of cosponsors of the reauthorization bill. There are now more than 75 bipartisan cosponsors in the House and Senate. We are continuing the process of educating Members of Congress about our programs and inviting them to visit local sites. We're expecting that the *National and Community Service Amendments Act* will be introduced soon.
- ***Appropriations*** – The House VA-HUD Subcommittee hearing was held on Tuesday, February 29, 2000. Those testifying included Harris Wofford, Wendy Zenker, and Anthony Musick. The hearing went well, especially because there was acknowledgement from both sides of the aisle that the Corporation has made progress on management challenges and has built stronger bipartisan support for our programs.

Preparations continue for the Senate VA-HUD and Labor-HHS Appropriations hearings. The Senate VA-HUD Subcommittee hearing is now scheduled for April 12, 2000 and the House Labor-HHS hearing is set for Thursday, March 30th. The Senate does not traditionally hold a Labor-HHS hearing.

The VA-HUD bill funds most of AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America and the Labor-HHS bill funds AmeriCorps*VISTA and the Senior Corps.

Senior Corps FY 2001 Budget Request Highlights -- As previously reported, the President's budget request includes an additional \$9.7 million for the Senior Corps. This request reflects the Corporation's interest in FY 2001 to provide resources to existing projects toward support infrastructure and technology needs.

The goal in FY 2001 is to assure that local projects have the technological capacity to participate in new automated systems and meet new requirements. This increased technology capacity will be necessary to maintain high quality fiscal stewardship and programmatic operations. This technology investment will

help projects meet hardware and software standards. When standards are met, funds can be used for other administrative costs.

The Corporation is under a government-wide requirement to move to an electronic funds transfer system. We are also in the process of developing an automated grant application and web based reporting systems. Consequently, the Corporation's request applies new funds to meet the administrative needs of local projects so that they can maintain the current scope and levels of activities. CNS believes that it is important to make this investment in technology requiring current grantees to add volunteers through PNS or establishing new grants.

Some important points to note about the specific 2001 request:

- In RSVP, the entire increase goes to existing projects for administrative cost increases and technology needs (an estimated \$5.1 million increase, over 11%).
- In FGP, the entire increase goes to existing projects for technology needs (an estimated \$1.1 million increase) and PNS grant augmentations.
- In SCP, over half of the increase goes to existing projects for technology needs (an estimated \$.7 million increase) and PNS grant augmentations. The balance will support an estimated 5 new projects.
- In Senior Demonstration Programs, a Challenge to Large Scale Organizations, would bridge the gap that exists between the capacity of retirees to volunteer and the ability of organizations to use senior volunteer resources effectively.

Corporation for National Service 1999 Performance Report due to the Congress this month -- The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) is intended to contribute to increased accountability for the expenditure of public funds, and to improve congressional decision-making through more objective information on the effectiveness of federal programs. All federal agencies, including the Corporation, must prepare annual performance reports and submit them to the President and the Congress within six months after the end of the fiscal year. The purpose is to compare actual program results with performance goals identified in an annual performance plan.

Later this month, the Corporation will submit its 1999 Performance Report to the Congress. Senior Corps' portion of the report includes progress toward its GPRA goals and indicators of success.

The best news of all: in 1999, the Senior Corps met 100% of its GPRA goals. The next edition of the Senior Corps Update will contain all of the details and actual performance results for each indicator, as well as some key 1999 accomplishments related to meeting the needs of children and Medicaid Waiver activities nationwide.

Senior Corps Project Operations Handbooks -- The Senior Corps Project Operations Handbooks are currently being revised based on comments received during the review process. The Senior Corps is very appreciative of the many thoughtful comments and suggestions received during the review process. Many of the comments will be reflected in the final version. Once the Handbooks are revised, they will be printed and distributed to Project Directors prior to the June conference.

Evaluation News

National Customer Satisfaction Survey Part 1: Grantees Rate the Corporation's services -- How satisfied are Senior Corps Project Directors with services provided by the Corporation for National Service? Finding out the answer to that question, across a variety of different services provided, was the task of Macro International, an independent evaluator. Through a telephone survey, Macro asked a random sample of 320 RSVP project directors, 223 FGP project directors, and 172 SCP project directors to rate services received from the Corporation on a 4-point scale (with 4 being very good and 1 being poor). Services rated included: (1) Providing policy, guidance, interpretation and clarification; (2) Providing training and technical assistance; (3) Providing a national vision of senior service; and (4) Issuing grants in a timely manner.

The results? Overall, the Corporation received high scores from project directors of each Senior Corps program. Here are some highlights from the findings:

Overall Rating for the Quality of Services Provided by the Corporation to its Senior Corps Grantees:

- FGP: 93% of project directors rated this as “good” or “very good”
- SCP: 93% of project directors rated this as “good” or “very good”
- RSVP: 88% of project directors rated this as “good” or “very good”

The Corporation's Average Score on a 4-point scale, with 4.0 equal to a perfect score:

- FGP project directors: Average score of 3.2 out of 4.0
- SCP project directors: Average score of 3.3 out of 4.0
- RSVP project directors: Average score of 3.1 out of 4.0

According to Project Directors, what are the most important services provided by the Corporation, and how did they rate the Corporation in performing these services?

- According to FGP project directors: Most important was issuing grants in a timely manner. The Corporation rated a 3.5 out of 4.0 in providing this service. Second most important service is providing timely responses to inquiries and calls, and the Corporation's rating in this dimension was 3.2 out of 4.0.
- According to SCP project directors: Most important was issuing grants in a timely manner. The Corporation rated a 3.5 out of 4.0 in providing this service. Second most

important was providing timely responses to inquiries and calls, and the Corporation's rating in this dimension was 3.2 out of 4.0.

- According to RSVP project directors: Most important was providing consistent information. The Corporation rated a 2.9 out of 4.0 in providing this service. Second most important was issuing grants in a timely manner, and the Corporation's rating in this dimension was 3.1 out of 4.0

National Customer Satisfaction Survey Part 2: Community -- The Customer and Community Satisfaction Survey is the second part of a series being conducted to meet the Corporation's Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requirements. This survey will ask selected volunteer station supervisors about the perceived benefits that Senior Corps volunteers bring to the station and the community. The information provided through this survey can be used in conjunction with the Accomplishments 2000 Survey (focusing on **what** the volunteers do) by adding the dimension of how and why these services are **valued** as critical in the community.

National Senior Corps Accomplishment Surveys 2000 -- The Senior Corps will conduct the second Project Accomplishment Survey this fall. A contractor to be selected by the Corporation will mail the surveys to project directors for distribution to selected station supervisors to complete. The survey solicits accomplishments information resulting from the direct activities of Senior Corps – accomplishments that affected the community served. All station supervisors' answers will be kept confidential by the contractor and will be reported to the Corporation in aggregate form.

The Corporation for National Service Strategic Plan Update -- The Corporation's Strategic Plan is a primary tool and blueprint that sets the parameters and context of national service and the role of the Corporation. The Strategic Plan includes the Corporation's vision statement, its mission, and five strategic goals. The Corporation is required by Congress to update and revise its Strategic Plan every five years. The current Plan covers the years 1997-2002, and the Corporation intends to deliver its revised plan to Congress in September 2000.

The process to update the Strategic Plan relies on input from a broad group of key stakeholders in the national service field, including volunteers, grantees, program participants, Congress, the Corporation Board of Directors, staff, and other organizations.

As the lifeblood of Senior Corps programs, ideas and suggestions from Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and RSVP volunteers are vitally important.

How Project Directors Can Contribute to Updating the Plan – Senior Corps encourages local FGP, RSVP and SCP project directors to take advantage of events that bring volunteers together, such as in-service training sessions or recognition, to ask volunteers for their ideas and suggestions. Senior Corps has prepared a Strategic Plan Update Guide and Questionnaire that will be sent to Corporation State Offices and placed on the Internet for local projects to use in: (1) providing their own input from the project director perspective and (2) capturing the input of Senior Corps volunteers.

About Special Meetings & Special Networking Sessions and How to Reserve Space

On Friday, June 23, 2000, from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM, space will be set aside for Special Meetings and Special Networking Sessions. If you would like to lead a Special Meeting or Special Networking Session on Friday, June 23, 2000, please fax or e-mail the following information to Jennifer Dean at 202-565-2789 or jdean@cns.gov

- Contact person, phone number, fax number and address
- Title of meeting/networking session
- 15 word summary of topic
- Possible number of attendees (an estimate would help us match the meeting/session with an appropriate room)

Special meetings scheduled prior to **February 18, 2000** will be advertised in our Session Selection Booklet for the Friday 3:00PM-5:00PM time slot. The availability of space for Special Meetings and Special Networking Sessions is limited, so first come, first serve. Room assignments will be based on the number of people who register for the special meeting or networking session.

About New Project Director Training – The session selection booklet will list several sessions appropriate for new project directors. Also, on Friday, June 23, 2000, from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM, there will be a special session for new project directors.

Materials Display Room Available During the Conference and How to Reserve Tables:

Starting on the evening of Wednesday, June 21, 2000, and continuing through Friday, June 23, 2000, tables will be available for resource materials that Project

**SPECIAL EVENTS
ALREADY SCHEDULED:**

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RSVP
DIRECTORS (NARSVPD) EVENTS:**

NARSVPD BOARD MEETING:

Dates: June 19 – 21

Time: To be announced

Room: To be announced

NARSVPD MEMBERSHIP MEETING:

Date: Wednesday, June 21

Time: Beginning at 4:00 PM

Room: To be announced

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCP
DIRECTORS RECEPTION**

Date: Thursday, June 22

Time: 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Room: To be announced

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FGP DIRECTORS
(NAFGPD) MEMBER RECEPTION**

Date: Thursday, June 22

Time: Evening (to be announced)

Room: To be announced

CALIFORNIA NSSC DIRECTORS MEETING

Date: Thursday, June 22

Time: 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM

Room: To be announced

Directors would like to share with all conference attendees. **It will not be possible to sell materials or items at the conference, however order forms of items may be distributed.** If your group

***The Conference 2000 News Page
June 22 – 23, 2000, Orlando, Florida***



or project is interested in having a table to display project materials, please fax or e-mail the following information to Jennifer Dean at 202-565-2789 or jdean@cns.gov by **March 15, 2000**:

- Contact person, phone number, fax number and address
- Project name and sponsor name
- Estimated space needed for materials (choose among the following)
 - One 10 foot rectangular table
 - Two 10 foot rectangular tables
 - Other

Session Selection Booklet and Selection Form status

Within the next few days, the Session Selection Booklet and Selection Form will be final and ready to print and send to all Senior Corps project directors. The Session Selection Booklet contains descriptions of the more than 140 workshops and networking sessions available at the conference. Project directors will register to attend specific workshops and networking sessions by completing a one-page Session Selection form and sending it in by **April 17, 2000**. The Session Selection Booklet and Selection Form will be mailed in hardcopy to all project directors, which will take an estimated 3 to 4 weeks. In the meantime, as soon as these documents are ready, they will be e-mailed to all Corporation State Offices so that individual projects can receive copies more quickly than waiting for the hard copy in the mail. These documents will also be placed on the Corporation for National Service web site at www.nationalservice.org so that project directors can download them directly. The Session Selection Booklet will have detailed instructions and answers to frequently asked questions. Enrollment in all sessions will be on a first come first serve basis.

Reminder About Hotel Accommodations

- If you are planning to attend the National Community Service Conference, June 24-28, 2000, please tell the hotel operators at the Marriott World Center that you are attending both conferences.
- Hotel Registration for the National Senior Service Corps Conference 2000 has begun. Housing registration forms for the June 22-23 Conference at the Marriott Orlando World Center have been sent to all Project Directors. The forms are postage paid and

**Questions?
Senior Corps
Conference Information
Line:
202.606.5000
extension 190
or e-mail:**

NSSC2000Conference@cns.gov

addressed to the hotel.

- The hotel room registration forms are due to the Marriott by **May 22, 2000**. Any questions regarding the Hotel or the Housing form can be made directly to the hotel. (800-621- 0638).
- If you are sharing a sleeping room with another Senior Corps project director, please make a note to that effect on your mail in card, or if you are speaking by telephone, with a hotel reservations staff person.

Conference Registration Continues:

- Conference Registration Forms were mailed to Senior Corps project directors in January. Please complete all sections of the form and return to the address listed in the instructions.
- Schedule reminder: The Senior Corps Conference will officially begin with the 8:30 AM Opening Plenary on Thursday June 22nd and will end at 9:00 PM Friday, June 23, after the dinner.
- The information line for the National and Community Service Conference, co-sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation, the Corporation for National Service and America's Promise is: **202-729-8101**.

Senior Corps 2000 Conference and Technology Sessions Ideas -- Now is your chance to share your vision of the types of technology sessions that would meet your needs. A computer lab with opportunities to learn and sharpen your Microsoft Office skills (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Outlook)? Smart web surfing and research? Working smarter through technology? Special software for Senior Corps projects? No guarantees that wishes will come true, but knowing **your** priorities will be extremely beneficial to all. Speak up and share your thoughts, wish lists, and ideas by sending an e-mail to **Angela Roberts** at aroberts@cns.gov

Programming for Impact Spotlight –

Mentoring and Impact – Ideas and Resources

In response to recent NSSCTALK list serv questions and interest, **Nancy Henry**, LEARNS Project Director, Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, posted the following information about her experiences directing a mentoring program for 14-21 year olds.

Mentoring is by nature a relationship-based activity, but that doesn't mean the effects of mentoring can't be measured. As a program developer, I found it use to focus on identifying realistic goals (What can mentors reasonable expect to see in terms of positive changes as a result of their time spent with a young person?) and out of these, developing reasonable expectations. It can be frustrating for all concerned if the service activities are not adequate for achieving the

SENIOR CORPS IN THE
NEWS!

SEE ATTACHMENT 1
FOR AN ARTICLE THAT
APPEARED IN THE
CINCINNATI POST
ON FEBRUARY 16, 2000

accomplishments and impact hoped for. For example, in a program with at-risk youth, mentors were asked initially to spend 2-4 hours a month with youth, generally at their own workplace. The impact the planners hoped for was a “reduced school dropout rate”. It took a year to realize that this was an unreasonable expectation for the level of “input” provided.

As a result, the amount of time mentors spent with youth was increased, and later we began to use more realistic process and outcome data to evaluate whether the mentoring efforts were successful.

- Examples of **process data**: Are the youth showing up for their mentor meetings? Are the majority of the mentor matches “taking”? What kinds of activities are mentors/students engaging in? How do mentors/mentees describe their relationships?
- Examples of **outcome data**: Are youth increasing school attendance? Do teachers report positive changes in student behavior and attitude? Have disciplinary referral been reduced?

There is a great compilation of available research on the impacts mentoring efforts have shown on the National Mentoring Partnership web sit. It can give planners an idea of what is reasonable, and ways to set up mentoring projects in the context of the five Programming for Impact elements. Web address: http://www.mentoring.org/f_resources.html

There is also a free online mentor manual available that has a good section on element of responsible mentoring programs, and evaluating mentor programs using process and outcome data. It’s called *Yes, You Can*, and is produced by the U.S. Department of Education. Here is the link to the manual: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/YesYouCan/>

Note: Senior Corps project directors with ideas and stories of their own are encouraged to send them to **Angela Roberts**, Senior Corps, at aroberts@cns.gov so that they can be recorded and then shared with everyone.

Minnesota Programming for Impact Success Story -- **Anoka County RSVP** is an example of how Programming for Impact placements are helping Minnesota’s RSVP projects to recruit “young seniors”. The Anoka County project recruited 71 new RSVP volunteers in 1999, 29 of whom were between the ages of 55 and 65 years. Project Director **Carolyn Jensen** attributes this success to new types of assignments that were intended to appeal to “young seniors”. Such placements provide real opportunity for the volunteers to take on meaningful service, often in direct contact with clients or agencies. The **Mankato RSVP** recently asked its volunteers what they found meaningful in their volunteer work. Many of the answers centered around providing services that were valued by those they served, providing real help, and knowing that they were needed and counted on.

Some of the responses included:

- “When I went to deliver dinner for Meals on Wheels, I found a woman lying on the floor. I called 911 and was able to get her the help she needed. I hate to think what would have happened if I hadn’t been there.”
- “My friendly visitor client said my visits were what was keeping him going. He knew he wasn’t alone.”

- “One woman cried. Simply because I was willing to give her a ride to and from the grocery store.”

Experience Corps and Seniors for Schools News -- In response to recent questions on the Experience Corps, here is a brief overview of the *Experience Corps* and *Seniors for Schools* demonstration projects.

In cooperation with Public/Private Ventures and Johns Hopkins University, the Senior Corps launched the Experience Corps demonstration project in 1995. This 18-month long pilot project was designed to place teams of seniors as tutors in urban elementary schools. Seniors worked one-on-one with children, developed and strengthened in-school and after-school activities, and served as a bridge to the community. The project was piloted in 12 schools in five cities: Philadelphia; Minneapolis; Portland, Oregon; Port Arthur, Texas; and the South Bronx, in New York City. Each of the five local projects was administered by local RSVP or Foster Grandparent Programs.

In the Fall of 1997, Senior Corps launched the Seniors for Schools demonstration project. This initiative built on and refined the core elements of the Experience Corps model (intensive service, incentives, diversity of participants, meaningful service roles, leadership, training, critical mass and the team concept) and narrowed the focus by adopting the goals of “America Reads”. Seniors for Schools volunteers who serve more than 15 hours per week receive a small monetary incentive of \$100 – 150 per month to help defray the cost of out-of-pocket expenses.

The nine Seniors for Schools projects are located in Leesburg, Florida; Boston, Massachusetts; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Kansas City, Missouri; Bronx, New York. The project has expanded over the past two years thanks to collaboration and funding from local school boards, private foundations and community partners. Seven out of nine project sites are managed by RSVP or FGP sponsors. Currently there are 428 Seniors for Schools volunteers serving 2,836 children in grades K-3 in 39 schools across the country.

Technology Spotlight

Sign up for NSSCTALK – Join the list serv and gain access to the latest news first! Also, find lively discussions, questions and answers from peers, and good ideas for success.

Subscribers may easily control their subscription settings either by sending traditional email commands or through a Web interface, both of which were outlined in a welcome message.

Angela Roberts with the Senior Corps will remain the Corporation’s liaison for the list serv.

Share Your Ideas for a Technology Resource Guide

Contact information for Zac Mutrux
NSSCTALK List Serv
Administrator

Zachary Mutrux
Webmaster/Database Specialist
National Service Resource Center;
ETR Associates zacm@etr.org
<http://www.etr.org/nsrc>
800-860-2684 x.130
ICQ: 21990620
AIM: NSRC TA

Senior Corps plans to develop and distribute a Technology Resource Guide at the 2000 National Conference for all project directors to take home and use. We want this guide to contain the types of information that is most helpful to and needed by Senior Corps project directors. If you have suggestions about topics, interests, or have ideas about what you would like to see included, please e-mail them to **Angela Roberts**, Senior Corps, at aroberts@cns.gov

Funding Successes for Senior Corps Projects

California— RSVP of Santa Monica reported a \$65,000 grant from the California Public Utility Commission for a project that will use RSVP volunteers to provide outreach and consumer education to isolated, frail seniors in the Santa Monica area.

Kansas – Marshall County RSVP in Marysville received a Weber-Guise Foundation grant for \$10,000. This grant is for discretionary spending as deemed necessary by the RSVP project director.

Missouri – The Kansas City SCP received \$8,400 from the Kauffman Foundation to support project operations.

Nevada – The Las Vegas RSVP project reported the following successes:

- \$8,000 from United Way for the telephone reassurance program, which placed more than 15,279 telephone calls to homebound older adults; and
- \$10,000 from the Las Vegas Housing Authority for project operations.

New Jersey – Middlesex County RSVP, sponsored by the Salvation Army, received \$4,800 from the United Way for its “Read Aloud Storytelling” program. Twenty-two RSVP volunteers were trained to serve in elementary schools in Perth Amboy and New Brunswick to read to children in kindergarten through fifth grade. Also from New Jersey, **Monmouth RSVP** received \$11,000 from the Sunfield Foundation for book purchases and distribution in the Red Bank Primary School.

Ohio – Summit County RSVP, sponsored by Senior Workers Action in Akron, received a \$23,000 grant from the City of Akron’s Community Development Block Grant.

Washington – RSVP of Walla Walla, sponsored by the County Department of Human Services, reported that its annual Holiday Gift Wrap fundraiser was the most successful ever. A total of \$5,584 was raised to for project operations and to pay for volunteer mileage and meal reimbursements. Nearly 100 volunteers wrapped holiday gifts during the season.

Wisconsin –

Coulee County Region RSVP in LaCrosse reported **\$13,000** from two sources: \$7,000 in memory of volunteer Elvie Zube by her family, who served as an RSVP volunteer at the Veteran’s Hospital in Tomah. The gift will be used to help RSVP volunteers with travel costs to the Veteran’s Hospital; and \$2,500 from the

Funding Successes for Senior Corps Projects

Gunderson Lutheran Foundation, \$3,000 from the Franciscan Skep Foundation, \$1,250 from the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, and \$1,750 from the Children's Miracle Network. The Children's Network dollars will support RSVP's BABES program, the Hospital Doll Project, and sewing projects to make items for babies of low-income mothers.

Total Non-Corporation Funding Reported This Month: \$ 158,784

Kudos to Senior Corps Colleagues and Volunteers Recognized for Excellence!

Colorado – Three Denver FGP Foster Grandparents were recognized in KMGH-TV's "Everyday Heroes" program, both as a news story and as part of a week-long salute to for their contributions to the Early Childhood Education Program.

Illinois – Lake County RSVP volunteer, **Norma Colby**, was nominated by the Lake County YMCA as the United Way, Adult-Age Volunteer of the Year. Norma helps in the child care program, and reads to the children. She taught the children how to make bird feeders and other crafts.

Kansas – Riley County RSVP volunteer **Frieda Griest** was selected as one of the United Way's 1999 Shining Star Award winners. Frieda has served with RSVP for 21 years, and is now 101 years of age.

North Carolina – Foster Grandparents **Irene Steele** and **Reverend Herbert Carter** of the Western Carolina Center in Morganton were named (honorary) "Faculty of the Week" at the North Liberty School. These Foster Grandparents were praised for their dedication and patience in their service to developmentally disabled children.

Tennessee – Foster Grandparent **Marie William**, serving through the Morristown FGP, was awarded the prestigious Joe Q. Dougherty Volunteer of the Year Award by the United Way of Hamblen County. This 72-year-old widow begins her days at 7:00 in the morning, traveling to

Kudos to Senior Corps Colleagues and Volunteers Recognized for Excellence!

her special needs child day care assignment.

National Senior Service Corps --- Getting Things Done

Helping Children

Michigan – Port Huron FGP recently received feedback from families who received Foster Grandparent services at the St. Clair County Health Department WIC Program. Two Foster Grandparents help out in the waiting room, interacting with and caring for the children during their parents' appointments. According to the WIC coordinator, "Foster Grandparents Martha and Jaunita are excellent. They are very engaging with the children, and watch the children closely, providing high quality service."

Another Port Huron FGP volunteer, Geri Kimbro, was praised for her services in the Woodrow Wilsom Elementary by classroom teacher Techla Tucker. Ms. Tucker noted, "The best thing about the Foster Grandparents and the Junior Great Books program is that the volunteers reinforce the same writing and listening concept that the teacher presents daily. It is important that our at-risk children see other adults enjoying reading and writing. Six of my lower academic children made a year's progress in reading in one semester, and our Foster Grandparent certainly contributed to this big improvement!"

Oklahoma – Foster Grandparents serving at the Sulphur Elementary School recently learned about the positive benefits of their service on the children served. For the past 16 years, Sulphur students have tested poorly on two national standardized reading tests. In an effort to help address poor reading scores, eight Foster Grandparents were placed at the school, and tutored children who performed below the 40th percentile in reading and math. A study of the most recent two-year period revealed that 78% of the children targeted to Foster Grandparent volunteers made significant gains in standardized tests post-tutoring, surpassing state and national averages.

Wisconsin – RSVP of Dane County in Madison recently received evaluation results from the 1998-99 school year. According to school staff, 98% of the children served by RSVP volunteers demonstrated an improved attitude toward learning, and 99% of the children improved reading performance. The RSVP volunteers tutored or mentored a total of 2,673 children during the year. Teacher's comments included:

"He (the student) made more than a year's growth in reading."

"RSVP volunteers help us reach students that may fall through the cracks."

"Ken (RSVP volunteer) was a reliable resource for extra reading time for my students, who desperately need that adult interaction time. I cannot imagine my classroom without Ken."

National Senior Service Corps --- Getting Things Done

National Service Programs Working Together to Get Things Done

Kentucky – Hopkinsville/Christian County Habitat for Humanity won a \$20,000 grant from the Aluminum Association, which had notified Habitat affiliates that were collecting aluminum cans to recycle about a grant to help those affiliates build houses. To apply for the building funds, Habitat affiliates entered their recycling plan in a competition, to compete for \$168,000. The AmeriCorps*VISTA member placed with Hopkinsville Habitat consulted with the RSVP coordinator to recommend volunteers for a committee to create a recycling plan and then help write the grant proposal. Working together, the RSVP coordinator and the AmeriCorps*VISTA member wrote the grant, while the committee designed and created a recycling plan.

Texas – RSVP in Midland, sponsored by Senior and Community Resources, has placed RSVP volunteers in a local after school program at a senior center for several years. The RSVP project was the catalyst for starting the after school program. Currently, 8 RSVP volunteers and an average of 25 children participate. The program operates 2 hours per day, 4 days a week. An AmeriCorps*State program recently started up operations in Midland, and the new AmeriCorps members will serve with the RSVP volunteers to expand the operation.

Resources

Learn More About Senior Corps Project Activities -- Corporation staff, Senior Corps project directors and other interested parties can receive upon request copies of issue lists -- information about what Senior Corps projects are doing in a particular service area, organized alphabetically by state. These lists are considered ongoing works-in-progress and are not necessarily comprehensive. They include information about projects gleaned from state office's weekly reports and from projects themselves. Issue lists that are currently available include:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. America Reads | 7. Public Safety | 13. Respite for Caregivers |
| 2. Community Development | 8. Mentoring | 14. Housing/Homelessness |
| 3. Environment | 9. Technology | 15. Independent Living |
| 4. Non-federal Funding | 10. Child Care | 16. Nutrition and Hunger |
| 5. Collaboration | 11. Unified State Plans | 17. Health |
| 6. Disaster Relief | 12. Intergenerational Projects | |

To receive copies of any list, please contact **Gloria Godwin**, (202) 606-5000 extension 189 or e-mail ggodwin@cns.gov

Funding and Resource Development Resources: Funding Across the Ages: A Tool Kit. This concise, user-friendly 38-page booklet from Grantmakers in Aging (GIA) is designed to help grantmakers understand aging trends and the opportunities created and will also be useful to grant seekers in developing proposals. Chapters include an overview of aging trends; concepts, steps, and resources for developing a grantmaking relationship; specific program areas: Intergenerational Programs, Education, Neighborhood Involvement, and Health; and resource information and materials. Relevant information may be freely copied. GIA is an educational nonprofit membership organization for staff and trustees of foundations and corporations concerned with aging. For information contact GIA, P.O. Box 5534, New York, NY 10185-5534, Tel: 212-877-2050.

Senior Corps Update is dispatched by e-mail to Corporation State Offices on the first Friday of each month. Please continue to share with Senior Corps Project Directors and other colleagues. **Editor:** Angela Roberts, National Senior Service Corps., 202-606-5000 ext. 111 or e-mail to aroberts@cns.gov. ***Comments, ideas and suggestions welcome !***

SUPER SENIORS: YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD TO NEED HELP. OR TO GIVE IT.

By Geoff Williams, Post staff reporter

To join the Senior Corps, call Catholic Social Services of Southwestern Ohio and ask for the Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion programs. Or call the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, which is located both in Covington and Cincinnati.

They assist the ancient. They aid the innocent. They're everywhere, though you'd never know it. These foot soldiers aren't showy, or searching for fame, riches or glory. People like Clara Bennett, 76, do their work quietly.

"She saved my life," says Jennie Gilbert.

At 97 years old, Ms. Gilbert is able to live in her own house - but she wouldn't be here if it weren't for her volunteer visitor, Ms. Bennett. And Ms. Bennett wouldn't be here if it weren't for Senior Corps.

You've heard of Peace Corps. You may know about AmeriCorps, where Americans assist Americans instead of those in the international scene. But chances are good that the most informed person on the street isn't Senior Corps savvy.

The elder statesman of the do-gooder groups, Senior Corps has three main programs, which all started as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society: the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, the Foster Grandparent Program and the Senior Companion Program. In 1993, the term Senior Corps was dubbed to represent all three groups, which were being shepherded into the newly formed Corporation for National Service, which also runs AmeriCorps.

Confusing, isn't it? But it works. Today, Senior Corps has more than 425,000 participating seniors who have put in about 80 million hours of service to their communities. Which translates into the United States receiving over \$1 billion every year in free, experienced labor.

The Senior Corps volunteers are 55 years and older. How much older? There is no limit. Nationally, the oldest Senior Corps volunteer was 101 years old. Closer to home, the oldest volunteer in the area, who began helping out at age 82, just retired at the age of 93, says David Mikkelsen, program director at Catholic Social Services of Southwestern Ohio, an organization which runs two programs underneath Senior Corps: Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions.

Several days a week, Ms. Bennett visits Ms. Gilbert. "Saved my life," Ms. Gilbert repeats. "By helping me, feeding me, cooking for me, taking care of me, taking care of my needs. And I don't have to ask her. She sees my needs and goes on and helps me."

And is she a good friend to you, too?

"If she wasn't, I'd throw her out the door," retorts Ms. Gilbert, and there are peals of laughter in the room.

The laughter comes from Ms. Bennett as well as the Catholic Social Services coordinator, Marilyn Schlake, and Erin Findley, a 22-year-old social work major from Xavier University. Ms. Schlake introduced Ms. Gilbert and Ms. Bennett to each other four years ago. But Ms. Bennett has been a senior companion for 14 years. Before that, she was a professional caretaker for older people.

But she was restless in retirement, and a friend had told Ms. Bennett of the senior companion program. So Ms. Bennett "took a shot at it, and I've been in it ever since, and I love it."

Helping Ms. Gilbert means that Ms. Bennett receives companionship, too. Although she's very active in her church, Ms. Bennett says that at home, often "I stare at the walls, so this is something that I look forward to every morning."

Senior Corps members do get paid for their efforts, but they will never become rich. Ms. Bennett earns \$2.55 an hour in the form of a tax-free stipend, so that it won't affect her Social Security or other government benefits. And her transportation to and from Ms. Gilbert's is reimbursed. The volunteers generally work 20 hours a week.

It all starts with a phone call, of course. For instance, over at the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, director Sandra Brown says interested seniors can then drop by their office and fill out an application. "We have made 50 to 60 types of interests that you might have," she said, "and so, besides the basic information, we get a feel for what you'd like to do, and then we try to match you up to your part of town."

RSVP most desperately needs seniors who have computer skills, or who are willing to do some tutoring for STARS (Seniors Teaching and Reaching Students), which works with the kids at Chase Elementary and Douglas Elementary.

"A lot of seniors like to work together - it's a socialization thing, and so we work really hard to get them together in groups, if that's what they want," says Ms. Brown, who adds that many seniors agree to be called in for one-time events, like last year's Tall Stacks. She also has volunteers working at places as diverse as the Cincinnati Zoo, the Aronoff Center for the Arts, the Museum Center, hospitals, retirement centers and the Cincinnati Association for the Blind.

The recipients of Senior Corps are grateful for the help. "They say we save them thousands of dollars," Ms. Brown said.

And the volunteers are grateful to help. Charles Taylor, a 60-year-old retired construction and postal worker, is volunteering at the Salvation Army Daycare Center. Having just started within the last few weeks, he's been enjoying every minute of his newfound charitable work. The feeling of assisting others, Taylor says, "has been perfect, believe me. I've never had experiences like this before."

Besides, Taylor adds, "I'm working towards becoming a senior citizen myself. So they're helping me to learn what it will be like."

At Covedale Elementary, Pat Hennecke is making her way up the stairs and saying, "The kids will be mad that I came up these steps alone. They like to help me up them."

Her "grandchildren," 13 sixth-graders who are in the "at risk" program, are at an assembly with their reading communication arts teacher, Patricia Robinson.

But they'll be here soon, says Ms. Hennecke, who spends four hours each school day at Covedale. She sits in the sixth-grade class for three hours, helping anybody who needs extra attention with their work, and later she makes her way to Debi McCrea's third-grade class. The children are always at lunch, and so for the first half hour, the two do mostly paperwork. Then Ms. Hennecke spends 30 minutes assisting Ms. McCrea with her teaching.

The third-graders adore Ms. Hennecke, always surrounding her with hugs upon their arrival. The teachers and the principal can't stop saying enough nice things about her. Even the sixth graders, who you might think might be too cool for this sort of affection, unabashedly love this woman, who actually has 10 grandkids of her own.

"Grandma!" one boy named Josh shouts, when Mrs. Robinson's class returns from the assembly, and he throws his arms around her. Later, when Josh hears someone mention the name "Mrs. Hennecke," he asks, "Who's Mrs. Hennecke?"

That's because they all call her Grandma. Even the principal.